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[INS. E1]

DISSEMINATION OF LITIGATION INFORMATION

Background of the Invention

The present invention relates to a new and improved
 method of disseminating information relating to criminal
 5 and/or civil litigation pending in a plurality of courts of law.

There are numerous texts which contain reports on
 criminal and/or civil lawsuits decided in state or federal
 courts. However, many of the cases which are filed in state
 or federal courts are not reported in published texts. Even
 10 if a particular case is reported in a published text, the text
 may be published years after the case is initially filed with
 the court.

Many different people have many different reasons for
 wanting to know about litigation. For example, an employer
 15 may want to know whether or not a potential employee has
 been involved in either criminal or civil litigation. A person
 in the process of selecting an attorney to represent him in
 bringing a particular cause of action may want to know
 whether or not a particular attorney has experience relating
 20 to cases for that cause of action. A person comparing two
 attorneys to determine which attorney could best represent

him may want to know the relationship between the number of lawsuits which each attorney files and the number of times the attorney either settles or wins the lawsuits.

Summary of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to a new and improved method of disseminating information relating to litigation pending in a plurality of courts of law. The method includes transmitting data relating to criminal and/or civil lawsuits filed in each of a plurality of courts of law to a database.
10 The data may be electronically or manually transmitted to the database. The database is accessed with terminals which communicate with the database by a network. Data relating to the lawsuits is transmitted from the database to the terminals which access the database.

15 It is contemplated that the data which is transmitted to and from the database may relate to different aspects of lawsuits filed in a plurality of courts of law. For example, the data could identify plaintiffs and defendants, the cause of action, the identity of the attorneys filing each of the
20 lawsuits, the identity of any expert witnesses, and/or the eventual disposition of the lawsuit.

 The data which is transmitted to the database may relate to state and/or federal courts of law. The data may relate to all courts of law within a state or to just some of
25 the courts of law within a state. It is contemplated that it will probably be desirable to have data for all courts of law within a plurality of states transmitted to the database. The

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database may determine a numerical relationship between various aspects of the data.

5 *INS. D2* *INS. D1* Brief Description of the Drawing
The foregoing and other objects and features of the invention will become more apparent upon a consideration of the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawing wherein:

10 Fig. 1 is a schematic illustration depicting the relationship of a plurality of courts of law to data transmitters, a database and computer terminals which access the database.

INS. D3 *INS. D4*
Description of One Specific Preferred Embodiment of the Invention

15 A system 10 for disseminating information relating to criminal and/or civil litigation pending in a plurality of courts of law, indicated by the numerals 12, 14, 16 and 18, as illustrated schematically in Fig. 1. Although only four courts of law 12-18 have been indicated schematically in Fig. 1, it is contemplated that a greater number of courts of law will
20 be included in the system 10. For example, it is contemplated that all of the state and/or federal courts within a plurality of the states of the United States of America could be included in the system. In fact, it is contemplated that all of the courts of law in the United
25 States of America could be included in the system 10.

Although it is believed that it will be preferred to have the system 10 include all of the state and federal courts

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within a plurality, if not all, of the states of the United States of America, the system 10 could be limited to courts of law in only one particular state or to courts of law in only a portion of one particular state. Alternatively, the system 10 could be limited to just a few of the courts of law in a plurality of states or to a few courts of law within a portion of a state. For example, the system 10 may initially be limited to state courts of law in a southern portion of a state and gradually expand to state courts of law in a northern portion of the state. As the system 10 is expanded, federal courts of law in the southern and/or northern portion of the state could be added to the system. As the system 10 continues to grow, state courts of law and/or federal courts of law in adjacent states could be added to the system. Although it is believed that it will be desirable to add all of the state and federal courts within each of the states included within the system 10, only a portion of the state and/or federal courts within a state could be included in the system 10.

Data transmitters 24 and 26 are provided to transmit data from the courts of law to a database 30. Although only two data transmitters 24 and 26 have been illustrated schematically in Fig. 1, it is contemplated that a larger number of data transmitters will be included in the system 10. For example, it is contemplated that one data transmitter could be provided for each of the courts of law. The data transmitters 24 and 26 transmit data relating to

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lawsuits pending in each of the courts 12, 14, 16 and 18 to the database 30.

Although a single database 30 has been illustrated schematically in Fig. 1, it is contemplated that a plurality of
5 databases may be provided. The databases may be interconnected to enable data to be transmitted between the databases. Thus, a plurality of databases 30 may be provided for each of a plurality of groups of courts of law.

The database 30 is connected with a plurality of
10 terminals 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44. Although only five terminals have been illustrated schematically in Fig. 1, it is contemplated that a greater number of terminals will be connected with the database 30. The terminals 34-44 may be at a plurality of locations in every state of the United
15 States of America.

The terminals 34-44 are connected with the database 30 by a network 48. In the illustrated embodiment of the invention, the network 48 is a global communication network, that is, the Internet. However, a different network
20 could be utilized if desired.

When a lawsuit is first filed with a court of law by an attorney who is in private practice, an attorney who is employed by a governmental unit, or a corporate attorney, the complaint filed with the court indicates relevant data
25 relative to the criminal or civil lawsuit. For example, the complaint may indicate the identity of the plaintiff, the identity of the defendant, the identity of the attorney or

attorneys filing the lawsuit, and the cause of action to which the complaint relates. The information filed with each lawsuit in each of the courts 12-18 is available to the public.

For example, when an attorney who is a prosecutor
5 files a lawsuit on behalf of a governmental body which is a plaintiff against an alleged criminal who is a defendant, the identity of the attorney, plaintiff, and defendant and the nature of the cause of action are usually publicly available. Similarly, when an attorney files a lawsuit against a
10 defendant who allegedly injured the plaintiff, the identity of the attorney, plaintiff, and defendant and the nature of the cause of action are usually publicly available. When a lawsuit is terminated or disposed of, the terms of any jury verdict, judges' decision, or settlement may be publicly
15 available.

When a lawsuit is terminated, information regarding the disposition of the lawsuit is also publicly available. Thus, jury verdicts and court decisions terminating lawsuits are usually publicly available. If a lawsuit is settled by
20 agreement between the parties, the details of the agreement may not be publicly available. However, the fact that there was a settlement is usually publicly available.

Data transmitters 24 and 26 are provided to transmit all data relating to the various lawsuits filed, continuing, or
25 disposed of in each of the courts 12-18 to the database 30. The data transmitters 24 and 26 may be individuals who travel to the courts of law and review the records at the

courts of law. Thus, the individual functioning as the data transmitter 24 would travel to the court 12 and obtain access to records relating to lawsuits filed and actions taken in pending lawsuits within a predetermined time period, for example, within the last month.

The individual functioning as the data transmitter 24 visually inspects the records and manually copies the information contained in the records. This results in the individual functioning as the data transmitter 24 obtaining all of the relevant information in regard to all of the lawsuits initiated, continuing or terminated within the time period, for example, within the last month, in the court 12.

The individual functioning as the data transmitter 24 would then hand deliver the data copied from records at the court 12 to the database 30. The information delivered by the individual functioning as a data transmitter 24 would be electronically entered into and stored in a memory at the database 30. The individual functioning as the data transmitter 24 may only transmit data relating to lawsuits filed or actions in pending lawsuits during a period of time in one court, for example the court 12, to the database 30. Alternatively, the individual functioning as the data transmitter 24 could transmit data relating to all of the lawsuits in a plurality of the courts, for example, the courts 12 and 14, to the database 30.

Another individual would function as the data transmitter 26. The individual functioning as the data

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transmitter 26 would review the records in a court, for example, the court 16, and manually copy the relevant information. The individual functioning as the data transmitter 26 would then hand deliver the relevant information to the database 30. The relevant information would then be entered into the database 30.

It is contemplated that a substantial number of individuals would be utilized as data transmitters. These individuals could be part-time workers, such as students or homemakers. Alternatively, the individuals functioning as data transmitters could be employees of the courts who would review the court records outside of their normal working hours.

It is contemplated that the database 30 would include a terminal at which data gathered by each of the individuals functioning as the data transmitter, for example the data transmitters 24 and 26, would be entered into an electronic memory. Thus, the data conveyed to the database 30 by each of the individuals who functions as a data transmitter would be entered into the database and be accessible over the network 48.

The data conveyed to the database 30 by the data transmitters 24 and 26 would include most of the publicly available information in regard to each of the lawsuits pending in one of the courts 12-18. Thus, the data transmitted to the database 30 by the data transmitters 24 would include the names and address of the plaintiff and the

defendant in each of the lawsuits. The name of the attorney representing the plaintiffs would be transmitted to the database 30. The cause of action for each of the lawsuits would also be transmitted to the database 30. The identity of the judge to whom the lawsuit is assigned would also be transmitted to the database 30.

As each of the lawsuits filed in the courts 12-18 of law progresses, the identity of the attorney representing the defendant would become publicly available. In addition, the identity of expert witnesses used by the plaintiff and/or defendant would become publicly available. The subject matter on which the expert witnesses testify would also become a matter of public record. This information in regard to the identity of the defending attorney and the expert witnesses, as well as the subject matter about which the expert witnesses testify, would also be transmitted to the database by the data transmitters 24 and 26,

When the lawsuit is terminated by settlement, jury verdict, decision of a judge, or other manner, this information would also be transmitted to the database 30. For example, if an individual charged with a crime is found to be not guilty, this information would be transmitted to the database. Alternatively, facts would be transmitted to the database along with information concerning the punishment to which the defendant is subjected, such as a prison sentence and/or fine. The outcome of civil litigation, to the extent publicly available, would also be transmitted to

the database 30. For example, a decision by either a judge or jury in regard to civil litigation would be transmitted to the database 30. If information in regard to a settlement between the parties is made part of the public record, this information would also be transmitted to the database 30 by the data transmitters 24 and 26.

The network 48 is connected with a plurality of terminals, indicated schematically at 34-44. The terminals 34-44 may be personal computers. The network 48 which connects the terminals 34-44 with the database 30 may be the Internet or global communication network. Alternatively, a more limited network could be provided between the database 30 and the terminals 34-44.

Individuals having a desire to obtain information relating to litigation pending or terminated in any of the courts 12-18 may access the database 30 through any one of the terminals 34-44. This will allow the individuals to obtain information relating to the identity of plaintiffs and/or defendants in all lawsuits filed within a period of time in all of the courts 12-18. In addition, the individuals can obtain information identifying the cause of action for each of the lawsuits and the attorney or attorneys who filed the lawsuits. When the case has been terminated, an individual at one of the terminals 34-44 can determine the disposition of the lawsuit. If a jury verdict is reached or a settlement is agreed to, the terms of the jury verdict or settlement to the

extent publicly available, would also be available from the database 30.

The database 30 would use the data transmitted to the database by the data transmitters 24 and 26 to determine numerical relationships or ratios indicative of data contained within the database. For example, a numerical relationship between the number of lawsuits in which one specific attorney represented litigants and the number of lawsuits which were decided in favor of a litigant represented by the one attorney would be determined by the database.

Similarly, the relationship of the number of lawsuits which one specific attorney settled to the total number of lawsuits in which the one specific attorney represented litigants could be determined. Similarly, the number of cases in which one specific attorney represented plaintiffs and the number of cases in which the one attorney represented defendants to the total number of lawsuits in which the one attorney represented a litigant could be determined. This information would allow an individual in the process of selecting an attorney to compare the won, lost and settled ratios or performance numbers for various attorneys. It would also allow an individual who is in the process of selecting an attorney to determine whether or not the particular attorney primarily represented plaintiffs or defendants.

Since the database 30 contains data identifying the cause of action for each of the lawsuits, it is possible to determine the number of lawsuits which any one attorney

has represented a litigant in regard to any specific type of action. For example, a determination could be made as to the number of times which an attorney has represented a litigant in regard to a medical malpractice action could be determined. Similarly, the number of times which an attorney had represented a litigant in regard to patent infringement could be determined. The outcome of the cases in which the attorney represented a litigant in regard to a specific cause of action could also be determined.

Since data in regard to all of the lawsuits and the cause of action of each lawsuit is transmitted to the database 30, the database can determine the numerical relationship between the number of lawsuits in which one specific attorney obtained a favorable outcome of the party to the lawsuit represented by the attorney for any one specific cause of action. For example, the database 30 could provide a numerical comparison between the number of patent or medical malpractice lawsuits in which an attorney obtained a favorable outcome for his client to the total number of the lawsuit of the specific type, that is, either medical malpractice or patent infringement, in which the attorney was involved. Of course, there are many other types of causes of action other than medical malpractice or patent infringement. The database 30 would contain data representative of the outcome of lawsuits for each of the various causes of action.

In addition to containing data in regard to attorneys, the database 30 would also contain data in regard to expert witnesses. The database 30 would contain data representative of the identify of expert witnesses and the type of cause of action in which the expert witnesses either assisted either a plaintiff or defendant. The database 30 would also contain information describing the subject matter of each expert witness' testimony.

Since the database 30 contains data representative of the outcome of all of the lawsuits in the courts 12-18 and the causes of action for all of the lawsuits, the database 30 can provide a performance number for each of the expert witnesses. This performance number may be a ratio of the number of times in which an expert witness appeared for a litigant who obtained a favorable outcome to a lawsuit to the total number of lawsuits in which the expert witness was involved. The performance ratio for the expert witness could be based on any particular type of lawsuit. Thus, the database 30 may determine the number of patent infringement lawsuits for which one specific expert witness appeared for litigants who obtained a favorable result to the total number of patent infringement lawsuits in which the one specific expert witness appeared on behalf of any of the litigants.

An individual considering the selection of an expert witness for a particular cause of action, for example, patent infringement, could determine the number of times each of a

plurality of expert witnesses had appeared in behalf of a plaintiff and/or defendant in a patent infringement lawsuit. In addition, an individual considering the selection of an expert witness could determine the number of times the expert witness had appeared in behalf of a litigant who
5 obtained a favorable result in the litigation.

In addition to containing information concerning the identity of the plaintiff, defendants, attorneys, and expert witnesses, the database 30 would contain information in
10 regard to the judges to whom the various lawsuits were assigned. The database 30 could determine the length of time which lawsuits for specific causes of action were pending before each of the judges in the courts 12-18. Thus, the database 30 could determine that for judge A,
15 patent infringement lawsuits would be pending for an average of four years, while for judge B patent infringement lawsuits would be pending for only an average of two years. Of course, the database 30 contains information regarding causes of action of many types other than patent
20 infringement actions.

It is contemplated that data relating to lawsuits in both courts of original jurisdiction and appellant courts will be transmitted to the database 30 by the data transmitters 24 and 26. This will enable the database 30 to determine the
25 number of appeals which are taken from each of the judges in the courts of original jurisdiction. The database 30 can also determine the outcome of the appeals. Thus, for any

one judge in a court of original jurisdiction, the database 30 could determine the total number of appeals and the number of appeals in which the judge is either affirmed or reversed. Similarly, if an appeal is taken from a lower appellate court to a higher appellate court, the database 30 would contain information in order to enable the number of appeals from any one appellate court judge to a higher appellate court to be determined and the outcome of the appeals.

The foregoing description has assumed that the data transmitters 24 and 26 would be individuals who would go to each of the courts 12-18 and manually review the records in the courts to determine the relevant information. It is contemplated that the data transmitters 24 and 26 could electronically review electronically recorded data in the courts 12-18. Thus, the relevant data regarding a lawsuit filed in any one of the courts 12-18 would be entered into an electronic database at the court where the lawsuit is filed. An electronic data transmitter 24 or 26 would review the data recorded in the electronic database or memory at a court to determine the relevant information in regard to each of the lawsuits filed with the court during a period of time. The data transmitter 24 or 26 would then electronically transmit the data to the database 30.

Regardless of whether the records in the courts 12-18 are manually reviewed or are electronically reviewed to obtain data relating to lawsuits in each of the courts, the relevant data would be transmitted to the database 30

shortly after a lawsuit is filed, an action is taken in a pending lawsuit, or a lawsuit is terminated. This will allow individuals at the terminals 34-44 to quickly obtain relevant data in regard to all lawsuits filed with the courts 12-18.

5 In view of the foregoing description, it is apparent that the present invention provides a new and improved method of disseminating information relating to litigation pending in a plurality of courts 12-18 of law. The method includes transmitting data relating to criminal and/or civil lawsuits
10 filed in each of a plurality of courts of law to a database. The data may be electronically or manually transmitted to the database. The database is accessed with terminals which communicate with the database by a network. Data relating to the lawsuits is transmitted from the database to
15 the terminals which access the database.

It is contemplated that the data which is transmitted to and from the database may relate to different aspects of lawsuits filed in a plurality of courts of law. For example, the data could identify plaintiffs and defendants, the cause
20 of action, the identity of the attorneys filing each of the lawsuits, the identity of expert witnesses, and/or the eventual disposition of the lawsuit.

The data which is transmitted to the database 30 may relate to state and/or federal courts of law. The data may
25 relate to all courts of law within a state or to just some of the courts of law within a state. It is contemplated that it will probably be desirable to have data for all courts of law

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within a plurality of states transmitted to the database 30.

The database 30 may determine a numerical relationship between various aspects of the data.

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